



Rock Hill schools' \$18 million immersion academy consolidates the Spanish language immersion programs at Ebinport and Richmond Drive elementary schools and the French immersion program at Rosewood.

## EDUCATION

# Group proposes name for new language academy

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### ROCK HILL

Students of Rock Hill's language immersion choice programs will have their own space this year, and a name has been proposed.

A committee was formed to come up with a name for the new Language Immersion Academy at Sullivan Middle School.

The \$18 million immersion academy consolidates the Spanish language immersion programs at Ebinport and Richmond Drive elementary schools and the French immersion program at Rosewood.



A language immersion classroom at Rosewood Elementary, with labels in French, shown in Jan. 2016.

After gathering feedback from the Rock Hill community, parents and

staff, the committee proposed the name Cherry Park Elementary School of Language Immersion. The

proposed name was submitted Monday to the Rock Hill school board.

The school board will vote on the proposed name at its Feb. 26 business meeting.

The academy, which will serve kindergarten to fifth-grade students in a language immersion program, is set to open in the fall 2018. The two-story building will connect with the middle school.

The school's construction is being funded through the \$110 million bond referendum passed in 2015.

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## Lake Wylie among 3 sites for hearings on Carolina Water Service rate increase

BY JOHN MARKS  
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### LAKE WYLIE

A public hearing is set for March 6 in Lake Wylie, where residents can testify in the Carolina Water Service rate increase case.

On Thursday, the state public service commission announced public hearings in Lake Wylie, Greenville and Columbia. The Lake Wylie hearing will be held at 6:30 p.m. March 6 at Camp Thunderbird.

Anyone wanting to testify will have three minutes. Testimony will be given under oath and recorded into the rate case. The public service commission, which ultimately will decide if Carolina Water gets all or part of its increases, will be present.

The utility is looking for increases statewide ranging from about 15 to 30 percent, both for water and sewer customers.

On Wednesday, the commission voted to allow York County to participate as an "intervenor" in the case. Meaning the county has access to all case filings, including proposed settlements. The county missed the deadline to file as an intervenor, but filed afterward when the county recognized the potential impact of a request in Carolina Water's application that could allow future rate changes without full public rate case proceedings.

U.S. Rep. Ralph Norman (R-Dist. 5) sent letters to

York County, public service commission, state and federal leaders with concerns about Carolina Water and its increase request. Norman asked that the increases not be approved. He also asked for information on past fines and water quality testing, specifically adherence to federal lead and copper requirements.

Robert Yanity with Carolina Water said all of the utility's systems statewide are in compliance with lead and copper rules.

"Carolina Water Service is committed to providing safe and reliable service to our customers," Yanity said. "This commitment requires that we make the necessary investments in our facilities to comply with regulatory mandates and meet our customers' expectations."

The utility asked for its rate increase, as it has in the past, based on works already done within the system.

"All costs included in the company's current rate increase request are for improvements that are already in service and benefiting our customers," Yanity said. "In fact, Carolina Water Service has invested more than \$11 million in improvements to its system in the last two-and-a-half years — money that has been spent to upgrade tanks, lift stations and interconnections."

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## Alleged Rock Hill drug dealer skipped out on court — until he had no choice

BY ANDREW DYS  
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### ROCK HILL

Court was ready to start Monday in York on a trial of an alleged repeat drug dealer, but the courtroom lacked one important part — the defendant.

A defendant who had escaped, police say.



Travis Hutchinson

charges of possession of heroin with intent to distribute, possession of

cocaine and escape.

In September, after his arrest on the most recent drug charges, police say Hutchinson escaped from custody while on the way from the Rock Hill Police Department to the York County jail.

Hutchinson manipulated the lock of the transport van in the September escape, then leaped out of

the moving van and ran, said Marina Hamilton, 16th Circuit assistant solicitor. Hutchinson was found hiding in a rural barn near the courthouse in York, with the handcuffs he had slipped off a transport van pole still attached to his arm.

Hutchinson, with past felony drug convictions, was looking at the possi-

bility of up to four decades in prison if he was found guilty at trial. He had been out on \$50,000 bond since November after the September arrest for escape, records show.

Trial was set for Monday afternoon. Hutchinson appeared for roll call in the morning Monday, Hamilton said, but was nowhere to be found in the afternoon when his case was called for trial. A judge issued a bench warrant for Hutchinson's arrest, court records show.

A bail bondsman found Hutchinson around 10

p.m. Monday at a Rock Hill home. Hutchinson was then returned to custody at the York County jail.

Surrounded by courthouse deputies, Hutchinson had no choice but to leave a holding cell and go to court Tuesday. He opted to avoid a trial and pleaded guilty to the two drug charges and escape.

He was sentenced to 15 years in prison, said Hamilton the prosecutor.

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